

Message Text

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR

SUBJECT: MORNING SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT REPORTS

1. LEBANON: TO THE BRINK--AND BACK?

WITH MARONITE SENTIMENT MOVING INCREASINGLY TOWARD FRANGIE AND KHATIB'S FORCES REPORTEDLY MASSED IN THE MOUNTAINS NEAR BEIRUT, MARCH 15 BEGAN WITH A THREAT OF RENEWED VIOLENCE. TENSIONS EASED, HOWEVER, AS THE DAY PASSED WITHOUT A MOVE AGAINST THE PRESIDENTIAL PALACE. AMONG SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENTS THE EMBASSY CITES:

--AL-AHDAB AND KHATIB ANNOUNCED THAT THEIR MOVEMENTS HAVE MERGED.

--THE KATAEB POLITBURO VOTED TO RALLY BEHIND FRANGIE AND AFFIRMED ITS SUPPORT FOR SYRIAN MEDIATION.

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--CHAMOUN'S NATIONAL LIBERALS ARE LIKEWISE GIVING PUBLIC SUPPORT TO FRANGIE.

EMBASSY COMMENT: THE BELIEF IS BECOMING WIDESPREAD THAT KATAEB AND NATIONAL LIBERAL SUPPORT FOR FRANGIE IS NOT CLEAR-CUT AND MAY BE A PLOY TO FORESTALL THE NAMING OF AN

UNWANTED SUCCESSOR. IN ANY EVENT, WE HAVE ANOTHER RACE BETWEEN RAPID DETERIORATION ON THE GROUND AND THE SEEMING SNAIL'S PACE OF POLITICAL NEGOTIATIONS. THE MAIN HOPE AGAIN SEEMS TO BE "SYRIA EX MACHINA." (CONFIDENTIAL) BEIRUT 2324, 2307 AND (LIMITED OFFICIAL USE) BEIRUT 2323, 3/15.)

2. THAILAND: ULTIMATUM ON RESIDUAL FORCES

AMBASSADOR WHITEHOUSE FOUND FOREIGN MINISTER CHATCHAI AND OTHER THAI OFFICIALS INTRACTABLE DURING A MARCH 15 DISCUSSION OF THE RTG'S SEVEN POINTS AND THE MARCH 20 DEADLINE FOR THEIR ACCEPTANCE. THE THAI SIDE WAS ADAMANT THAT:

--PRINCIPLE ONE, EMBODYING A STATEMENT OF THAI SOVEREIGNTY WITHOUT ACKNOWLEDGING THE VALIDITY OF PREVIOUS AGREEMENTS, IS THE KEY POINT AND CANNOT BE CHANGED.

--THE PROPOSED RESIDUAL PRESENCE IS OF MINIMAL VALUE TO THAILAND.

--IF AGREEMENT IS NOT REACHED BY MARCH 20, US OPERATIONS, EXCEPT FOR JUSMAG, MUST CEASE AND PERSONNEL MUST BE STEADILY WITHDRAWN.

--PRIME MINISTER KHUKRIT CANNOT POSSIBLY MEET WITH THE AMBASSADOR BEFORE MARCH 19.

CHATCHAI AND UNDER SECRETARY ANAN, WHILE CONCEDING THAT US PERSONNEL WOULD REQUIRE PROTECTIVE STATUS GREATER THAN THAT OF "TECHNICAL EXPERTS," BALKED AT GRANTING THEM DIPLOMATIC IMMUNITY. THEY CONTINUALLY TIED THIS AND OTHER SOVEREIGNTY-RELATED ISSUES TO THE PRESSURES OF THE UPCOMING ELECTION.

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(SECRET) BANGKOK 5929 (EXDIS), 3/15.)

3. SOUTH AFRICA-ANGOLA: DELAYING TACTICS

FOREIGN MINISTER MULLER SUMMONED AMBASSADOR BOWDLER MARCH 15 TO REQUEST THAT THE USG USE ITS INFLUENCE WITH OAU STATES TO POSTPONE UNSC DEBATE ON ANGOLA AT LEAST UNTIL NEXT WEEK, PREFERABLY LONGER. MULLER SAID:

--CONTACT WITH THE MPLA HAS NOT YET BEEN MADE, BUT HE REAFFIRMED SOUTH AFRICAN DESIRE TO PULL ITS FORCES BEHIND THE BORDER AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

--DEBATE AT THIS TIME WOULD UNDO CURRENT EFFORTS THROUGH OTHER AFRICAN STATES TO WORK OUT AN UNDERSTAND-

ING WITH THE MPLA REGARDING TRANSFER OF PROTECTION OF THE HYDROELECTRIC FACILITIES.

MULLER SIMULTANEOUSLY ASKED THE SAME ASSISTANCE OF THE BELGIAN AMBASSADOR AS REPRESENTATIVE OF THE EC-9.

AMBASSADOR'S COMMENT: I AM NOT ABLE TO JUDGE WHETHER MULLER'S REQUEST IS GENUINE OR A PLOY TO GAIN POSTPONEMENT OF THE DEBATE UNTIL APRIL. UNLESS THERE IS STRONG PRESSURE BY BLACK AFRICANS TO THE CONTRARY, HOWEVER, I THINK IT WOULD BE ADVISABLE TO GIVE THE SOUTH AFRICANS THE ADDITIONAL TIME TO CONTACT THE MPLA. (CONFIDENTIAL) CAPE TOWN 272, 3/15.)

4. FRG: IMPACT OF THE BUNDESRAT VOTE

EMBASSY BONN FORWARDS ITS ASSESSMENT OF THE DOMESTIC POLITICAL RAMIFICATIONS OF THE MARCH 12 PASSAGE OF THE POLISH PENSION AGREEMENT:

--SCHMIDT'S GOVERNMENT ACHIEVED A MAJOR BREAKTHROUGH IN ITS OSTPOLITIK, BUT SOME IN THE SPD, INCLUDING WEHNER, WILL POINT TO IT AS A MISSED CHANCE FOR A GOOD ELECTION ISSUE.

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--CDU-CSU CHANCELLOR CANDIDATE KOHL EMERGED STRENGTHENED, HAVING FORCED THE COALITION'S HAND AND EMERGED FOR THE FIRST TIME AS CLEARLY IN CHARGE OF THE OPPOSITION.

--GENSCHER, AFTER A STERLING DIPLOMATIC PERFORMANCE, MANAGED TO KEEP THE FDP'S OPTIONS OPEN FOR COOPERATION WITH THE CDU. (CONFIDENTIAL) BONN 4312, 3/15.)

5. PORTUGAL: THE SOCIALIST MEETING AND PARTY POLITICS

NOTING THAT THE PS-SPONSORED MEETING OF EUROPEAN SOCIALIST LEADERS IN OPORTO WAS A MAJOR POLITICAL EVENT IN PORTUGAL, EMBASSY LISBON REPORTS:

--SOARES MADE THE CLEAREST PUBLIC STATEMENT YET OF PS

DEDICATION TO EUROPE, STRESSING THE NEED FOR AN IN-DEPTH STUDY OF GOP POLICY TOWARD THE EC.

--DESPITE SA CARNEIRO'S AND THE PPD'S EFFORTS TO DOWN-PLAY THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE GATHERING, THE MEETING GAVE THE SOCIALISTS' ELECTION CAMPAIGN AN IMPORTANT BOOST.

--PPD ATTACKS, HOWEVER, TOOK SOME OF THE SHINE OFF THE EVENT AND MANAGED TO KEEP AZEVEDO FROM ATTENDING.
(CONFIDENTIAL) LISBON 1665, 3/15.) KISSINGER

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